

## Making Sense of a Small Papyrus Fragment from Hellenistic Egypt (P. Mich. Inv. 7007)

P.Mich. Inv. 7007 is one of the many small and challenging fragments of the Michigan collection (Verhoogt, 2017, 170). Despite its four edges being torn and frayed and several holes and tears dotting the piece's body, this fragment of light brown papyrus (12.3 x 6.7 cm) preserves enough continuous text to yield meaning, including four complete lines: γέγρ(απται) εἰς τὸν τόμον. | □κ Χοιὰχ κ̄δ̄. γραφή | τῶν Διονυσίου | ἐν Κροκοδίλων πό(λει), "*Written onto the roll. The 20th year on the 24th of Choiak. A list of things belonging to Dionysios in Krokodilopolis ...*" Although oftentimes such a documentary piece like P.Mich. Inv. 7007 can be read with some difficulty after learning the script and coming to terms with issues of spelling, grammar, punctuation, abbreviations/signs, the general condition of the papyrus, etc., it is the contextualization of the text itself that often poses the greater difficulty. This presentation focuses its attention on the particular challenges that P.Mich. Inv. 7007 presents to its reader in making sense out of the text.

In exploring this piece I will be considering a range of important issues: (1) **Provenance and Acquisition**. The provenance of P.Mich. Inv. 7007 is uncertain. It appears to be part of a sizeable group of Michigan papyri salvaged from mummy cartonnage including "documents from the financial and police administration of the Arsinoe nome at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE" (Müller 1995, 237). Loftus and Schwendner (1996, 91) note that "the necropolis from which the cartonnage came cannot be precisely established," despite the fact that "informed speculation at the time of the find had it that the cemeteries at Abusir al-Malaq or al-Lahûn were likely candidates." Loftus and Schwendner (1996, 90-91) as well as Parca (2010, 224) also observe that the cartonnage pieces in the Michigan collection are in some

way connected to papyri pieces that made their way into European collections at the same time. Correspondence from Ludwig Koenen chronicling his acquisition of papyri from Michael Fackelmann is available on the University of Michigan library website (<https://www.lib.umich.edu/papyrology-collection/acquisition-reports>), including his letter (7/15/1982) to Richard Dougherty, then Director of the Library: “some of the most important literary papyri which came to light during the last ten years including the group which I reported above as being recently bought by Cologne came from mummies found at the same cemetery as the cartonnage I bought”.

(2) **Date.** The palaeography of P.Mich. Inv. 7007, which calls to mind a chancery style, while lacking the relentless horizontal linear drive of some mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century texts (Cavallo 2009, 105), seems to place it in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> or early 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, an assertion supported by the dating of other cartonnage pieces from the Michigan collection. Given these parameters, the reference in the text to the 20<sup>th</sup> year (of a Hellenistic Egyptian ruler) on the 24<sup>th</sup> of Choiak narrows the date to either 9 February 227 BCE (Ptolemy III Euergetes I) or 30 January 185 BCE (Ptolemy V Epiphanes).

(3) **Language and Document Type.** The language of the text enriches our understanding of such documents. For example, P.Mich. Inv. 7007 offers a second attestation of γέγρα(απται) ... γραφή (ll. 1–2) (Cf. Trinity College Inv. Pap. Gr. Folder 127r.1, 202 BCE in Baetens 2014, 95) and an example of γέγρα(απται) being paired with the preposition εἰς. Central to the understanding of this fragment, however, is the word γραφή (l. 2), which literally means “something that is written,” but more specifically denotes a “list,” “letter,” or “contract.” As a header here, since line 1 protrudes into the left margin, γραφή suggests a new entry and is clearly consistent with a list that has been officially recorded, perhaps by the village

κωμογραμματεύς. This particular list belongs to an unidentified Dionysios (l. 3) whose possessions apparently reside ἐν Κροκοδίλων πό(λει) (l. 4). γραφή is often followed by a genitive in this context. τῶν Διονυσίου here is likely an ellipse (sc. ὑπαρχόντων, πραγμάτων).

### Bibliography

- G. Baetens, 2014. "A Petition to the 'Epimeletes' Dorotheos in Trinity College Dublin." *AncSoc* 44: 91–104.
- Cavallo, G. 2009. "Greek and Latin Writing in the Papyri." In *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology*, ed. R. Bagnall, 101-148. Oxford.
- Loftus, A. and G. Schwendner. 1996. "Overview of 769–81, Papyri Recovered from Cartonnage." In *P. Michigan Koenen (= P. Mich. XVIII)*, eds. C. Römer and T. Gagos, 89-97. Amsterdam.
- Müller, M. 1995. "A Circular Letter and a Memo (P. Mich. Inv. 6980)." *ZPE* 105: 237-243.
- Parca, M. 2010. "A Soldier and a Horse (P.Mich. Inv. 7009)." *CE* 85: 224-229.
- Verhoogt, A. 2017. *Discarded, Discovered, Collected. The University of Michigan Papyrus Collection*. Ann Arbor, MI.